

than 600 miles from our shore any assistance, any intervention. And not only do we deny them; we are prohibiting, prohibiting other countries from going in and assist them.

Shame on this administration. And hopefully we can have a regime change or a change in our government come November.

Ever since I was elected to office, I have advocated on behalf of the Haitian people, and it simply enrages me that Haiti has been nothing more than a stepchild to policymakers in the State Department. While Cubans gain access to U.S. citizenship by merely stepping on land in Florida, Haitian immigrants are not just detained indefinitely when they try to come to the United States, but they are mercilessly sent back to the island.

These groups that refer to themselves as "the opposition," are in reality nothing more than armed gangs often funded by drug lords, that are on the verge of taking power through undemocratic means. I repeat: these are not legitimate political opposition groups, many of them are the same criminals that were in power before Aristide, the same thugs we removed from office just a decade ago. Ex military, ex death squad members, drug and gang members, and members of the wealthy business elite that dislike representative government are their leaders. It is more than ironic that just as the Bush administration admonishes Haiti and other nations for being "undemocratic," they led the way for these armed gangs (the same gangs they criticize in the press) to usurp power.

They did not like the idea of a government that is trying to redistribute money to the poor and provide Haitians with proper education and health care, because they feel threatened that their previous absolute hold on power will dissolve. And since they can't defeat Aristide in a fair election, they resorted to overthrow him militarily.

I have traveled to Haiti numerous times with Members of the Congressional Black Caucus, met with Haitian government officials, opposition groups, and leaders of NGOs, and served the Nation as an election observer, and I will tell you that Aristide won by a landslide. This cannot be denied by anyone. Yet for whatever reason, the Bush administration has been anything but a friend to the Aristide government, and insists ironically that Haiti does not deserve our monetary assistance because their elections were "unfair." It simply mystifies me how President Bush, a President who was selected by the Supreme Court under more than questionable circumstances (in my district alone 27,000 votes were thrown out), is telling another country that their elections were not fair and that they are therefore undeserving of aid or international recognition.

Haiti is a nation that is still in the incipient stages of democracy and is in desperate need of foreign aid, and the Bush administration's economic stranglehold on the island has exacerbated Haiti's already crippled economy. The economic situation in Haiti is dire, yet the Bush administration's State Department apparently does not lend help to nations for humanitarian reasons, only when a precious natural resource such as oil is at stake.

Moreover, I remain outraged that Attorney General John Ashcroft and the Miami INS office is explicitly going after the Haitian refugees. In December, the INS routinely released

refugees who passed credible-fear interviews—unless they were deemed special security risks connected to September 11. That is still the case for asylum seekers from Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba and almost any other country—except Haiti. The Miami INS, under orders from the Department of Justice, imprisons Haitians seeking to prove they deserve asylum, while asylum seekers from other countries roam freely within American borders. This unfair discrimination against Haiti has become a common practice under the current administration, and the Congressional Black Caucus is one of the few voices fighting against this outrageous policy.

To conclude: I reiterate my utter disappointment in the events that occurred in Haiti, and my outrage at the Bush administration's contribution to the fall of a democratically elected government.

Mr. CONYERS. I thank all of the Members that have participated in the Special Order.

HELP HAITI

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BLACKBURN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, first, let me thank Members of Congress tonight, the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) for our focus and for leading this effort not only tonight but over the years with regard to Haiti.

Of course, Haiti tonight is on the minds and in the hearts of the international community, of many of us here in Congress and throughout the country. And tonight I want to first ask and raise concern for the safety and for the security of President Aristide and Mrs. Aristide and for their family. Given the circumstances of their departure, I think it is appropriate that we be concerned about their safety and insist that our government ensure that they not be put in harm's way.

For many years now we have consistently attempted to increase the Congress's role, the administration's role with regard to engagement with Haiti. We have asked over and over again for immediate humanitarian assistance, development assistance, infrastructure assistance. Really, all of those efforts to allow the Haitian people to live, to survive, and to move forward. Yet, repeatedly, over and over again, this administration has blocked any type of assistance, has embargoed efforts to ensure that the Haitian people receive the funding that they have negotiated, every single time. This administration went to the international community and blocked from the world the type of aid and assistance and economic development that Haiti needs.

It is unbelievable the type of circling of the wagons that we have seen as it relates to Haiti. Now, unfortunately, our country has helped to ensure that democratically elected president of

Haiti was overthrown and this is totally unacceptable. What I have seen in the last few years is that really this country was setting up the situation which has occurred over the last few weeks. It really has helped democracy fail in Haiti, and that to me is a shame and it is a disgrace. Over and over again this administration has undermined and undercut President Aristide's attempts at social and economic development and the political challenges that have devastated his country. Over and over again I witnessed President Aristide comply with all of the requirements of the United States. One month it was this. The next month it was that. The next month it was something else. The Haitian government continually complied, continually stepped up to the plate even when it caused some discussions and some turmoil in their own country as a result of, for instance, having to raise the price of gasoline so that the international banks would be satisfied so that they could get the money that then negotiated for their loans. Outrageous kinds of requirements this country put on the Haitian government. Yet, still President Aristide responded and complied.

So what we have witnessed over the last couple of weeks really was the march to a coup d'etat. We witnessed the execution of a plan that I believe was really developed by, of course, those; and we are having hearings tomorrow so we will begin to expose and at least ask the questions, but it was the execution of a plan that we saw, I remember I think during the 1980s around Nicaragua, around some of the attempts to overthrow governments in Latin America, the U.S. ambassador, Negroponte, and Noriega who then was Senator Helm's person. We see many of the same kinds of players in place. And so, unfortunately, I am seeing an updated repeated performance of what we saw in the 1980s in Latin America. And, yes, this country has said that central to its foreign policy is regime change. That is a public kind of policy. And regime change manifests itself in many, many ways.

If I were Venezuela or Brazil, not to mention Cuba, I would be a bit concerned with what we know now and what we see taking place in terms of how the execution of a regime change, foreign policy takes place.

Finally, let me just say, when Secretary Powell says, it is nonsense and we are engaged in conspiracy theories, I would ask people to look at the "U.S. War Against Haiti, Hidden From the Headlines." These are the facts. We will begin to expose it tomorrow.

AMERICAN REGIME CHANGE IN NOVEMBER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, there is a president in the western